

Points of Demonstration

Project Location

2077 East Howe Street in the Montlake Neighborhood.

Property Description

The Property consists of a "through lot" with public streets on both ends and adjoins a public street right-of-way on one side. The right-of-way will never be developed as a street and is maintained as totally wild natural vegetation preferred by the community. A public stair in the center of the right-of-way connects the two streets. The property is steeply sloped with a drop of 55 feet across the length of the property. The property is currently developed with a single family house fronting on Howe Street and a detached garage fronting on Blaine Street. Both house and garage were constructed in 1903. The house has been renovated and enlarged several times seamlessly maintaining the original character. The existing garage is inadequate for today's cars. The property is zoned SF 5000.

Housing Statement and Intention to Build

The Owner is proposing to enlarge (widen) the outdated (size) garage and construct a carriage house living unit (an accessory dwelling unit, "ADU") above the garage. The resulting rental unit would be appropriate for occupancy by one or two adults. The unit would be approximately 560 square feet and rent for less than \$1,000 per month including utilities. The carriage house would provide needed rental housing in the Montlake neighborhood. An ADU is permitted in a single family zone.

Affordability Features

An ADU can be developed at a lower cost and hence the rent that must be charged can be lower because the land is already paid for in the primary residence on the property. In this instance, the rental unit will be an affordable choice in a neighborhood with few rental opportunities and within walking distance of the university.

The Code Questions

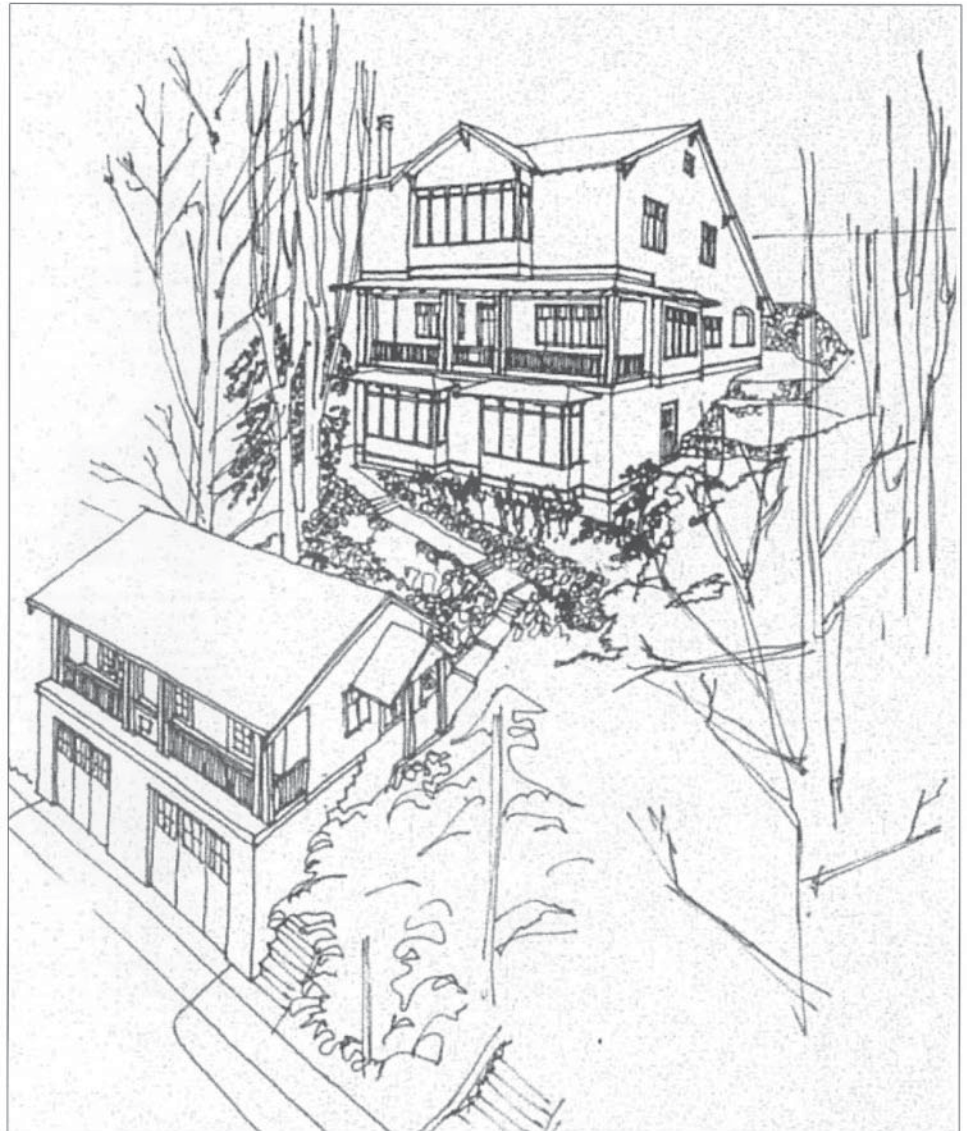
A fixed code necessarily precludes many quality projects that should be done since it is impossible to anticipate all the situations and opportunities that will occur "on the ground". This proposal demonstrates an on the ground situation where an ADU could be developed appropriately, however, present code limitations will not allow the development as follows:

- 1) The code does not permit a "detached" ADU. The proposal otherwise meets the requirements of the ADU Ordinance as to owner occupancy and parking.
- 2) In the case of a through lot, the code specifies that the rear yard be classified as a "front yard". A garage is permitted in a front yard which would allow the garage to be expanded. However, the code limits the garage to a width of 24 feet and an area of 600 square feet. The proposed width is 28 feet to accommodate garage storage in the limited garage depth available due to the steep site slope. While the garage area is less than 600 square feet, it exceeds 40% of the required front yard which is another restriction in the code.
- 3) The living unit is not permitted to be constructed in the front yard setback, yet the unit cannot be set back further because of the steep slope of the lot.

Neighborhood Appropriateness

The proposed carriage house is designed to be appropriate in the context of the neighborhood and block. The design carries out an unstated Montlake custom of sensitive additions throughout the neighborhood; the design follows the design vocabulary of the primary residence. The porch softens and minimizes the elevation above the garage front on the property line. The height of the living unit roof above existing grade does not block the views from the primary residence or views from the house next door.

The Department of Neighborhoods indicated that the Montlake neighborhood is not in the process of neighborhood planning. In addition, the community club was contacted, however, the responsible parties were not available to respond because of work or vacation schedules.



Montlake Garage Conversion

Architect:

Michael Trower AIA
Seattle, WA

Owner:

Michael & Mary Ann Trower

Project Summary & Jury Comments

A "detached" ADU in the front yard? Why not, if done well –and if design review helps determine and insist on quality? Sensitive design takes advantage of a unique site with discretion and tact.

